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Letter dated 15 May 2015 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Central African Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Please find attached the documents adopted at the Bangui Forum, held from 4 to 11 May 2015 as part of the transition process in the Central African Republic.

The two documents are entitled "Republican Pact for Peace, National Reconciliation and Reconstruction in the Central African Republic", and "Agreement between the Transitional Government and the armed groups on the principles of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation and of integration into the uniformed State forces of the Central African Republic" (see annex I).

I am also transmitting herewith the opening and closing statements made at the Forum by the Head of State of the Transition, Ms. Catherine Samba-Panza (see annexes II and III).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Larry Marcel **Koyma**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Please recycle

Annex I to the letter dated 15 May 2015 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Central African Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Republican Pact for Peace, National Reconciliation and Reconstruction in the Central African Republic

We, the participants in the Bangui National Forum,

Bearing in mind the main recommendations of the thematic committees of the Forum and drawing upon them in formulating this Pact,

Gathered in Bangui from 4 to 11 May 2015 as representatives of the people of the Central African Republic as a whole, in all their political, social, cultural, ethnic and religious diversity,

Reaffirming our commitment to upholding the basic documents governing the transition in the Central African Republic, including the Constitutional Charter for the Transition of 18 July 2013; the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement between the armed groups in the Central African Republic, signed in Brazzaville on 23 July 2014; the road map for the transitional institutions and bodies; the Commitment Agreement signed by politico-military groups on 23 April 2015; and the Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Repatriation Agreement between the Government of the Central African Republic and the armed groups, signed on 10 May 2015 and annexed to the present Pact,

Considering all the formal and informal dialogue and reconciliation initiatives taken in preparation for the Bangui Forum, including local popular consultations aimed at strengthening national unity,

Mindful of our duty to act as worthy advocates of the views, expectations and aspirations of our compatriots in taking part in the work of the Bangui National Forum,

Reaffirming our commitment to the unity, sovereignty and indivisibility of the Central African Republic, our beloved homeland,

Deploring the spiral of violence that has undermined social cohesion and national unity in the Central African Republic,

Reaffirming our deep commitment to the process of dialogue and reconciliation as the best means of restoring a just and lasting peace, the foundation for comprehensive development in the Central African Republic,

Aware of the significant efforts made by the Government of the Central African Republic, together with its partners, to emerge from the crisis and restore constitutional order and political stability through free and transparent elections,

Determined to make a positive contribution to the implementation of the resolutions and recommendations of the Bangui National Forum through measures and mechanisms for restoring peace and promoting reconciliation and good governance,

Convinced that the Bangui National Forum is a historic opportunity to rebuild the Central African Republic on the basis of a national pact rooted in the principles of democracy, social justice and good governance,

Undertake, through this National Pact for Peace, Reconciliation and Good Governance (Republican Pact), to work diligently in pursuit of the following objectives:

Governance (democratic and economic) and institutional reform

We reaffirm our consensus, as Central African Republic stakeholders, on:

- The need to create conditions conducive to the organization, throughout the country and in a timely manner, of the constitutional referendum and of free and transparent general elections that will ratify the restoration of the constitutional order, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitutional Charter for the Transition and with the agreed timetable and procedures, and to undertake to facilitate the participation of refugees in these elections;
- The obligation of all stakeholders to abide scrupulously by the Constitutional Charter for the Transition;
- The adoption and signing of a code of conduct by political parties and groupings, candidates and the press, with a view to a process that meets the standards for democratic elections in a peaceful environment, and a commitment to settling disputes through legal means;
- The need to strengthen citizen participation and political representation of the regions through the prompt organization of local elections at the end of the transition process;
- The introduction of a constitutional provision ruling out the possibility of amnesty for crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of genocide committed in the Central African Republic;
- The promotion of inclusive and participatory democracy based on the principle of equality between men and women; the strengthening of social cohesion, justice and reconciliation in the Central African Republic; and the introduction of a constitutional provision allowing the executive branch to conduct popular consultations on key social issues;
- The need to take account, in the process of finalizing and adopting the new Constitution, the concepts of secularism and citizenship; the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples; the separation of powers and democratic oversight of the Government; and the national, professional and multi-ethnic nature of the defence and security forces of the Central African Republic, as well as the principle of democratic civilian oversight of such forces;
- The introduction of a constitutional provision prohibiting the seizure and holding of power by force and establishing that political activity of any kind is incompatible with military status;
- The introduction of a constitutional provision strengthening national sovereignty and requiring that the foreign relations of the Central African Republic be conducted in a manner that reflects the dignity and interests of its citizens and the need to protect the territorial integrity of the State, and the

inclusion of a mechanism for parliamentary oversight of compliance with that provision;

- The need to establish transparent mechanisms for managing State resources, to enact anti-corruption legislation and to operationalize the national financial investigation agency and other structures aimed at consolidating good governance in the country;

- The establishment, in the new Constitution, of a high authority on good governance as an independent institution for oversight and policymaking; protection of the national heritage; transparency in the use and management of natural and mineral resources; and the fair distribution of profits from extractive industries to ensure that they contribute effectively to national development and to improving the lives of all citizens;

- The strengthening of ethical standards in political life, in particular through the immediate reform of the legal framework for political parties; the objective determination, in the medium term, of financing modalities for political parties; the adoption of a law on the status of the opposition; the promotion of equitable access to State media; and the promotion of women's and young people's participation in elective political office, including through the establishment of quotas;

- Reform of the legal framework governing the press and revitalization of the regulatory bodies overseeing the communication and audiovisual sector; promotion of and respect for ethics; immediate implementation of measures to ensure media coverage of the entire country; and liberalization of the audiovisual communication sector;

- The effective implementation of the law on the status of former Heads of State.

Restoration of State authority, redeployment of the Administration and decentralization

We reaffirm the consensus among all Central African Republic stakeholders on:

- The incremental redeployment and strengthening of an Administration that upholds the values of secularism, fairness and neutrality at the local level in order to ensure an effective State presence throughout the country, in particular before, during and after the general elections;

- The implementation of measures to ensure that the redeployment of State structures reflects the principles of representation, regional balance and inclusiveness and the provision of basic public services for the benefit of all the people of the Central African Republic;

- The establishment of rules governing the functioning of the Administration, particularly with regard to ensuring that civil service appointments, promotions and advancements reflect equitable geographical and community representation, as well as performance and regional and gender balance;

- The implementation of a proactive policy of decentralization and regionalization and the strengthening of the prerogatives of decentralized local governments (regions, departments and communities) under the new Constitution;

- The strengthening of the role of local, traditional and customary authorities to take into consideration the need for social cohesion and inclusiveness and to promote community dialogue, including through the establishment of a Territorial Council with advisory jurisdiction over local government issues.

Justice and reconciliation

We reaffirm the consensus among all Central African Republic stakeholders on:

- The need to strengthen and respect the constitutional provisions on the protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Central Africans, without discrimination as to age, gender, ethnicity or religion, and the right to freedom of movement throughout the national territory;
- The need to formalize the observance of Islamic holy days as non-working public holidays, in the interests of equity and national reconciliation;
- The creation of a socioeconomic and security environment conducive to the return of internally displaced persons and refugees;
- The strengthening of the role of courts and tribunals in protecting human rights, and the establishment of a national human rights institution;
- The effective establishment, with the support of the international community, of the Special Criminal Court in the Central African Republic, and, to this end, the need to strengthen the technical and operational capacity of local courts; to establish protection mechanisms for judges, witnesses and victims; and to ensure the implementation of the mutual legal assistance agreements signed within the framework of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, the Economic Community of Central African States and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region;
- The need to prosecute those responsible for the crimes committed in the Central African Republic and, to this end, to cooperate with the investigations, prosecutions and judicial proceedings to be undertaken by the Special Criminal Court, other national courts and tribunals and the International Criminal Court;
- The establishment of a justice, truth, reparations and reconciliation commission, with branches at the local level, to identify and investigate crimes and abuses committed in the Central African Republic with a view to classifying them into two categories:
  - Those whose perpetrators must be brought to justice;
  - Those that may be subject to reparations through the payment of compensation or the performance of community service, in order to promote a spirit of contrition and inter-community reconciliation;
- The establishment of a transitional justice mechanism in accordance with the overall National Reconciliation Strategy; the institution of a day of remembrance of the victims of the crises in the Central African Republic; and the promotion of a civic and citizenship culture in the Central African Republic.

Peace and security

We reaffirm our consensus, as Central African Republic stakeholders, on:

- The requirement that armed groups commit themselves fully to the process of strengthening democracy in the Central African Republic and that they express any grievances through peaceful and democratic means;
- The timely implementation of the Agreement on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, as adopted at the Bangui National Forum, and the establishment of a new disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme that provides for the retraining and community reinsertion of former combatants, inter alia through support for the creation of labour-intensive employment initiatives, as well as advocacy and communication;
- The immediate and spontaneous launch of the process of immediate voluntary disarmament by all politico-military groups;
- The immediate implementation of article 4 of the Brazzaville Cessation of Hostilities Agreement of 23 July 2014 between the unconventional politico-military groups in the Central African Republic, which concerns the regrouping of the armed elements signatories to the Agreement, in order to create conditions conducive to a peaceful electoral environment;
- The identification by armed groups of all foreign fighters in their ranks and the repatriation of such individuals to their countries of origin, with the support of international partners;
- The need to take the specific needs of women, youth and children into account in all phases of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process;
- The need to implement a defence and security sector reform and restructuring strategy in the Central African Republic, encompassing all components of the defence and security forces (armed forces, gendarmerie, police, and justice system) and based on the principles and modalities agreed upon at the Bangui National Forum.

Economic and social development

We reaffirm our consensus, as Central African Republic stakeholders, on:

- The need for the Government to incorporate all the recommendations made at the Forum into national rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes;
- The urgent need to provide humanitarian assistance to the populations affected by the recent crises, including through the establishment of a social solidarity fund;
- The implementation by the Government of an integrated reconstruction and economic development strategy targeting the most disadvantaged regions of the country, including the development of road, energy and telecommunications infrastructure, as well as a road map for modernizing key growth sectors and providing basic services throughout the territory;

- The implementation of a genuine policy of employment for all (including in particular young people, women and vulnerable groups) based on investment optimization objectives, with the provision of special support to nationals in order to promote the emergence of Central African businessmen and businesswomen, and greater incentives for foreign investment through mechanisms to promote the private sector;
- The restoration, throughout the country, of basic social services, including schools, health centres and hospitals (including HIV/AIDS treatment), access to safe drinking water and sanitation, and access to social housing for all victims of the recent crises in the Central African Republic;
- The opening of a genuine dialogue among all economic and social stakeholders in order to ensure the collective development of concerted and sustainable solutions for improving the collective management, by nationals of the Central African Republic, of their country's economic and social issues, including with respect to the integrated reconstruction strategy;
- The need to ensure effective legal and judicial protection for victims, and particularly for the most vulnerable groups;
- The need to ensure the transparent and rational use of natural resources, in particular oil, diamonds, gold, uranium and others, in order to contribute to the country's development, and the need to review all cooperation frameworks to that end.

We request the Transitional Authorities to set up, without delay, an agreed framework for monitoring the implementation of the conclusions and recommendations of the Forum and of the present Pact, which is binding on all components of the nation. In this regard, we request the National Transitional Council to consider the outcomes of the Forum in its deliberations and to translate them into action in the legal and regulatory spheres.

We solemnly call upon the Transitional Government, the National Transitional Council and the government and parliament resulting from the forthcoming elections, as well as all key stakeholders of the nation, to comply fully with the present Pact, and urge them to ensure diligence and vigilance in its implementation and follow-up.

Annex

Agreement between the Transitional Government and the armed groups on the principles of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation and of integration into the uniformed State forces of the Central African Republic

Preamble

Considering the Constitutional Charter for the Transition of 18 July 2013;

Bearing in mind the continued commitment of Her Excellency Ms. Catherine Samba-Panza, Head of State of the Transition, to promote dialogue and reconciliation among all the sons and daughters of the Central African Republic and to safeguard the integrity of the national territory, as reiterated in her address to the nation on 4 July 2014;

In the light of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed on 23 July 2014 in Brazzaville by the unconventional armed groups in the Central African Republic;

In the light of the policy statement signed by the participants in the Brazzaville Forum;

Bearing in mind the Commitment Agreement between the Government and the politico-military groups, signed in Bangui on 23 April 2015;

Bearing in mind the pledge of 5 May 2015, signed by the politico-military groups that participated in the Bangui Forum, to end the recruitment and use of children and other serious violations of the rights of the child;

Bearing in mind the commitment of all political and civil society actors in the Central African Republic to achieve peace;

Bearing in mind the commitment of the international community and the global support for the Bangui Forum agreements;

In the light of the recommendations made under the "peace and security" thematic cluster of the Bangui National Forum;

Firmly resolved to strengthen the rule of law and build a national army inclusive of all segments of Central African society;

The Transitional Government of the Central African Republic and the aforementioned armed groups, in the presence of the political establishment, civil society and the international community, agree as follows:

Article 1

The combatants affiliated with all the armed groups agree and solemnly undertake, before the people of the Central African Republic, to put a definitive end to the armed conflicts in the Central African Republic.

The combatants affiliated with those armed groups formally undertake to lay down their weapons, renounce armed struggle as a means of political advocacy, participate in a disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme, and engage in political competition as defined in the present Agreement.

Article 2

The present Agreement provides for the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation of combatants affiliated with all the armed groups operating in the territory of the Central African Republic.

Article 3

The eligibility criteria for participation in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme are as follows:

1. Combatants must be members of the armed groups signatories to the present Agreement.
2. Combatants must surrender all working or non-working military weapons, explosives, mines and other military items in their possession.
3. Children associated with armed forces and groups are eligible for the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme, whether or not they have weapons.

Article 4

All former combatants and former armed elements signatories to the present Agreement shall assemble within a reasonable time period, subject to the mobilization of the necessary resources, at sites to be agreed upon with the Transitional Government and the international community. During this time, such former combatants and armed elements shall be the responsibility of the Government with the support of its partners.

Before the elections, and pending the mobilization of the necessary resources for the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process, the combatants shall present themselves at specific sites, where they will be informed, identified, regrouped, disarmed and cared for during the process.

Article 5

Bearing in mind the Commitment Agreement between the Government and the politico-military groups, the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme shall comprise the following tasks, to be conducted at the sites to which candidates for the process will report:

1. First, children associated with the politico-military groups will be identified, irrespective of whether or not they have a functioning weapon in their possession, with a view to redirecting them immediately to specific government programmes, with the support of partners;
2. The second task will be to verify whether each candidate meets the eligibility criteria;
3. Eligible combatants will then be identified and registered in a database. They will receive a demobilization card. At this stage, women will be separated from men. Women shall have the same opportunities;
4. Eligible combatants will be made aware of and informed about the content of the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and

repatriation plan. They may choose to be reintegrated into the community or to volunteer to become provisional members of the uniformed State forces under the conditions set out in article 4 of the present Agreement;

5. Combatants who choose to be reintegrated into the community will be transferred to their host communities with a basic support package, and will participate with other community members in community development programmes that generate training and employment opportunities, as part of the community reintegration programme.

Article 6

The national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme shall be restricted exclusively to eligible combatants. Ineligible combatants, primarily unarmed combatants, shall be transferred to their communities of origin and included in the following specific programmes:

1. The national income-generation programme for combatants and at-risk youth, carried out nationwide and supported by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the United Nations Development Programme and other partners;

2. The community violence reduction programmes supported by MINUSCA and development partners;

3. The reconstruction and development programmes set up by the Government and the international community;

4. The Government and the leaders of the politico-military groups, together with MINUSCA and other partners, will coordinate donor-funded programmes to promote the social reinsertion of former combatants.

Article 7

Some former combatants participating in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme will be integrated into the uniformed State forces. The recruitment capacity of these forces shall be established under the new law on military programming and security sector reform.

Integration into the uniformed forces shall be undertaken gradually and on a case-by-case basis. It shall be governed by criteria of professionalism and fairness and shall be aimed at rebuilding the country's security institutions.

Integration will be possible only after a transparent verification process supported by the international community.

Former combatants who volunteer to join the uniformed forces but do not pass national recruitment tests shall be redirected to the community reintegration programmes.

Article 8

Combatants who are identified as foreigners and who have not committed war crimes in the Central African Republic shall be repatriated to their countries of

origin. The Government, with the support of MINUSCA and other partners, shall establish international contacts with a view to the repatriation of foreign combatants.

Article 9

The institutional and coordination framework for the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme shall be set up by the Government and shall include representatives of the armed groups, civil society and the international community.

A monitoring and evaluation mechanism shall be established along the same lines.

Article 10

The present Agreement shall enter into force upon signature and shall be widely publicized, as necessary.

Done at Bangui on 10 May 2015

Signed:

(*Signed*) Mr. Abel **Balenguele**
Deputy Coordinator
Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique

(*Signed*) Mr. Herbert Gontran **Djono Ahaba**
President
Rassemblement patriotique pour le renouveau de la Centrafrique

(*Signed*) Mr. Landa **Nzengue**
President
Union des forces républicaines fondamentales

(*Signed*) General Mohamed **Dhaffane**
President
Séléka rénovée

(*Signed*) Mr. Larry Nordine **Mahalba**
Spokesperson
Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice

(*Signed*) Mr. Marcel **Bagaza**
Representative
Front démocratique pour le progrès de la Centrafrique

(*Signed*) Mr. Patrice Edouard **Ngaïssona**
General Coordinator
Coordination des ex-combattants anti-Balaka

(*Signed*) Mr. Souleymane **Daouda**
Political Adviser
Unité du peuple centrafricain

(*Signed*) Mr. Armel **Ningatouloum Sayo**
President
Révolution et justice

(*Signed*) Mr. Philippe **Wagramalé Ndoto**
President
Union des forces républicaines

Signed:

For the Presidium of the Bangui National Forum
(*Signed*) Abdoulaye **Bathily**

For the Transitional Government
(*Signed*) Marie Noelle **Koyara**

For the national stakeholders
(*Signed*) Gerard **Lakosso**

For the observers

– Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations
(*Signed*) Babacar **Gaye**

– Special Representative of the African Union
(*Signed*) [Illegible signature]

– Special Representative of the President of the Republic of the Congo and International Mediator in the crisis in Central African Republic
(*Signed*) Basile **Ikouebe**

– Representative of the Economic Community of Central African States
(*Signed*) [Illegible signature]

Annex II to the letter dated 15 May 2015 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Central African Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement delivered by Ms. Catherine Samba-Panza, Head of State of the Transition, at the opening ceremony of the Bangui National Forum, held in the chamber of the National Transitional Council, on 4 May 2015

Before I deliver my speech, I would like to ask for a moment of silence in memory of all the compatriots who died during the tragic and painful events, and of the brave soldiers of the international forces who came to our aide and died while carrying out their duties.

I thank you.

His Excellency Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo and International Mediator in the Central African crisis,

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Chad, personal representative of His Excellency Mr. Idriss Deby Itno, current Chair of the Economic Community of Central African States,

Representatives of Heads of State and Government,

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations,

The Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States,

The representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission,

The Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region,

The representative of the International Organization of la Francophonie,

The special representative of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation,

The President of the National Transitional Council,

The Prime Minister, Head of Government of the Transition,

The President of the Transitional Constitutional Court,

The Chair of the High Council of Communication,

The President of the National Electoral Authority,

Members of Government of the Transition,

Heads of delegations and representatives of international institutions,

Ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions and consular posts,

The President of the Presidium of the Bangui Forum,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The people of the Central African Republic,

Dear compatriots participating in the Bangui National Forum,

First of all, on behalf of the people of the Central African Republic and myself, I would like to warmly and fraternally welcome to the Central African Republic the distinguished guests who have honoured us with their presence at the opening ceremony of the Bangui National Forum, which was on the transition agenda. I also welcome the many people from all regions of the Central African Republic who are attending this event, which represents a milestone in the history of their country.

The Bangui National Forum is the culmination of an entire process in the search for peace, stability and national reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

This is therefore the ideal time and place to solemnly reiterate the gratitude and deep appreciation of the people of the Central African Republic to the entire international community for its unwavering commitment in support of our efforts through the actions of the Central Africa Multinational Force, the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic, the Sangaris force, the European Union-led peacekeeping force and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic.

I wish to express our gratitude to the President of the Republic of the Congo, Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, for his international mediation efforts; their Excellencies Mr. Idriss Deby Itno, current Chair of the Economic Community of Central African States; Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, current President of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community; Mr. José Eduardo dos Santos, current Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region; the African Union; the United Nations; the European Union and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation for supporting the process of resolving the crisis in our country.

I also wish to express my gratitude to France, the United States and the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic for their unfailing support for the Transitional Government in its efforts to promote peace in the country.

Distinguished guests,

Dear compatriots,

After the Brazzaville talks involving the Central African Republic stakeholders, under the auspices of the International Mediator, which resulted in the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, the process of normalizing the situation in the Central African Republic was expected to continue through the other steps agreed in Brazzaville, namely, popular local consultations and, above all, the Bangui National Forum.

Despite the doubts that surrounded the organization of this Forum, which the people of the Central African Republic had all been looking forward to, here we are today.

I would like to pay special tribute to President Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of the Congo, the International Mediator in the Central African crisis and Co-Chair of the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic, who,

on behalf of the Economic Community of Central African States, has participated personally and fully in the dialogue and national reconciliation process in the Central African Republic.

Mr. President and dear brother,

Your presence here, despite your busy schedule, is the perfect illustration of your strong interest in and commitment to peace and well-being in the Central African Republic and in the subregion. The people of the Central African Republic are aware that your many initiatives are designed solely to pull the country back from the brink.

I know you could not have done otherwise, not only because of the historical ties between our peoples, but also because of the visible impact that your actions have had on the gradual return of security and peace in our country. The people of the Central African Republic still remember and will always be grateful that, during the worst periods of the crisis, such as in October 2014, you sent your Special Representative to put out, for the umpteenth time, the fire that was going to burn down the Central African Republic.

Your presence, Mr. President, was eagerly awaited and we are extremely honoured and privileged to have you here.

Distinguished guests, dear compatriots,

Given the context and conditions in which I assumed the presidency of the transition in January 2014, I had no other choice than to rally all the people of the Central African Republic around the rebuilding of their country through a vigorous strategy aimed at combating violence and promoting dialogue and social cohesion at all levels.

It is in this context that I had formulated a vision which went as follows: reconciliation at the bottom, dialogue at the top and justice in the middle. Through this vision, my goal was to break from the past, when the voice of the people was hijacked at the top, and to make it possible for the people to express themselves freely and to participate actively in the search for solutions to their ills.

The local popular consultations, held for the first time in the history of this country, allowed the people to speak freely about their fate and destiny. This Forum was all that was left to permanently embody the will to put an effective and lasting end to the violence, killings and destruction, and pave the way for harmonious coexistence and the reorganization and rebuilding of the country on a more solid and lasting foundation.

The resounding success of the local popular consultations, the successful discussions between the Government and the politico-military groups and the preparatory forums involving children, women and civil society organizations proved me right on this point.

Going forward, the people of the Central African Republic will have to work towards the same goal and take control of their destiny. I am particularly pleased that this Forum brought together a large number of the people's representatives from the 16 prefectures and refugee sites in neighbouring countries that have experienced these recurrent crises. They will be able to use that experience to provide the necessary guidance for crisis resolution.

The people of the Central African Republic, my dear compatriots,

Our country, the Central African Republic, is among the countries that have organized the largest number of national meetings, dubbed "national deliberation seminar", "national debate", "national dialogue" or "inclusive political dialogue" at different times and in different circumstances.

Yet, this is without a doubt the country that has had the largest number of recurrent crises.

This is why this situation requires us to engage in a profound self-examination.

I believe that this Forum should not be just another forum. It should be a gathering for people representing all political, sociological, economic, cultural and denominational affiliations to discuss all the issues affecting the Central African Republic and propose innovative solutions to the major challenges facing a modern society in the twenty-first century.

This Forum should also provide an appropriate framework for deepening our reflection on all the issues that divide or separate us, to ensure that the broad strategic directions for rebuilding a new republic that is united, supportive, strong and proud of its diversity are established at the end of this crucial meeting for our country.

This Forum will not be a people's court to judge and point fingers. It will also not be used for political calculations or for undermining the current institutions of the transition, which are already regulated by the Constitutional Charter for the Transition, nor will it be used to distribute impunity licences by granting a general amnesty to the executioners of the people of the Central African Republic.

Instead, it must enable us to plan our collective future together and calmly. Therefore, we must rise above the partisan and pointless bickering that has inflicted all sorts of suffering on children, young people and women, who represent the vast majority of the victims of these crises.

We should all think deeply about all these victims and identify promising outlets for young people, women, former combatants, internally displaced persons and refugees for a new Central African Republic.

Fortunately, many people of the Central African Republic, tired of the infighting, endless conflicts and fratricidal wars, share this view and are committed to being part of the country's reconciliation and reconstruction process.

My dear compatriots,

Our country's image has been tarnished throughout the world by the horrors and acts of barbarism we have had to commit. It is up to us to seize the opportunity of this Forum to prove that, on the contrary, we are a dignified people, who are able to turn the page on a dark past and craft a different future for the Central African Republic.

We must rebuild today the Central African Republic of tomorrow on a new and more solid foundation.

Those of you who are here have the privilege of being the architects of this reconstruction. Do not forget that you carry the hopes of an entire nation, of a people listening to what will be said and decided here.

Distinguished guests,

My dear compatriots,

The current transition is the result of a long process in which we all participated. It is the result of a national, subregional and international compromise.

The road map of the transition clearly indicates that the transition must lead to the organization of free, democratic and transparent elections. The issues at stake in the coming elections are well known. Financial support for the Central African Republic may not continue if the electoral process results in delays in the return to constitutional legality. We must therefore make every effort to ensure that a legitimate government is elected by August. This is what the Transitional Government and the National Electoral Authority, with the support of external partners, are seeking to do.

To speed up the electoral process, a strategic committee is now working closely with the National Electoral Authority and international partners to ensure that these elections, which will mark the end of the transition, are organized efficiently.

While I am not a candidate in the elections in question, in accordance with my oath, I obviously have the duty to ensure that they do not push the country back into the abyss owing to poor organization.

The revised electoral code and the constitutional referendum will play a significant role in the process. The National Electoral Authority will have to assume considerable responsibilities in this process. We hope that in time it will have all the appropriate means to launch the various operations leading up to the June-July 2015 elections.

The electoral process is actually everyone's responsibility. It calls for the general mobilization of national institutions and stakeholders. Proposals for concrete measures aimed at restoring social cohesion and managing our conflicts through dialogue will be the real keys to the success of the elections.

The candidates, whoever they are, should propose to the people of the Central African Republic a vision of the country, a vision of society that includes real governmental programmes built around a genuine national revitalization project.

If it runs smoothly, the Bangui National Forum should create the conditions for the proper organization of the elections by initiating the necessary opening of hearts and minds without which there can be no peaceful elections.

It is therefore easy to understand why, following up on the idea, formulated by the Heads of State of the Economic Community of Central African States, of a dialogue among the various factions of the Central African Republic, to be held in N'Djamena, I personally supported and defended the organization of this Forum on which the hopes of an entire people rest. I am confident that this Forum will be the starting point for the genuine revival of the Central African Republic.

Distinguished guests,

My dear compatriots,

The future of the Central African Republic depends, above all, on bringing the security situation under control. But the full restoration of security and peace in the country requires an extensive demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and

repatriation programme. This onerous and delicate operation calls for a clear project that can have no cost. It requires not only political will and a broad consensus, including among the belligerents, but also the mobilization of internal and external resources. The same is true for the reorganization of the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic based on republican principles and a new vision of the military. A meticulously developed demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and repatriation programme and security sector reform should take into account all contingencies, including plans for the future national army, reorganized along republican and modern lines.

This issue deserves to be discussed at the Bangui Forum in order to make informed decisions about the future national republican, multi-ethnic and trained army.

My dear compatriots,

My vision of the new Central African Republic, which I ardently hope to see, can best be described as that of a State based on the rule of law serving the citizens of the Central African Republic, who can dream and develop their life projects in a modern, prosperous and sustainably peaceful country.

I hope and wish to share this dream with all participants at this Forum, without exception.

Consequently, during this Forum, we should define the main guidelines for promoting a new citizenship made of reciprocal individual and collective responsibilities. Before being able to claim their rights, all people in the country must first assume their duties and responsibilities as citizens, vis-à-vis the State, the community and the world. We must be truly aware of our country's difficult situation and start working in earnest.

We should also jointly develop a new social contract to ensure equal opportunities for all with regard to access to education, health care, training and employment.

This will enable us to build, strengthen and develop social cohesion within a nation-State by accepting our differences.

We should also propose foundations for the rebuilding of our institutions to make them strong and competent, capable of modernizing the Central African Republic and transforming it into a developmental State in this day and age of globalization.

We should propose the foundations for community governance which, beyond the traditional decentralization process, requires the authorities to be more attuned to the concerns of the people in order to better understand their legitimate expectations and provide the appropriate solutions.

We should propose mechanisms that will allow for the building of a strong economic base and promotion of a modern and competitive domestic private sector in a modern Central African Republic. We must not simply rely on the old formula of natural resources, which are plentiful in our country, but build a new economic model that can create wealth and provide jobs for our young people, our women and all citizens of the Central African Republic in their legitimate quest to improve their quality of life.

Finally, we should propose a framework and mechanisms for consultation and ongoing dialogue that will enable the people of the Central African Republic to become stakeholders who are building together and winning together.

Distinguished guests,

Dear compatriots,

The themes chosen for this Forum include:

– Peace and security

– Governance

– Justice and reconciliation

– Economic and social development

As you can see, this Forum should enable the people of the Central African Republic not only to air their political concerns, but also to clearly formulate their vision of the future that would pave the way for the emergence of the Central African Republic.

We must leave this Forum with a new vision of our nation-State, a new social contract of values and national cohesion, and a final and comprehensive agreement for peace and reconciliation.

I will personally see to it that the commitments that will be made at this Forum are fulfilled.

Distinguished guests,

Dear compatriots,

Before concluding, let me pay a well-deserved tribute to the Preparatory Committee of the Bangui Forum, which has laid out the foundation for our work. I also wish to congratulate the Technical Organizing Committee for the quality of the work they were able to do, in record time, and to the Presidium of the Forum for all the supervisory work done since it was established prior to the Forum, under the chairmanship of Professor Abdoulaye Bathily.

I also wish to commend all the national stakeholders for their willingness to participate in the Forum process, through their effective presence in all Forum bodies.

I will conclude my remarks by again expressing our profound gratitude to the distinguished guests and all our partners in the international community for all the support we have received so far and especially for their noteworthy presence at this ceremony.

I also wish to acknowledge the multifaceted support of friendly and brotherly countries and praise the international community for facilitating the holding of this Forum. Bilateral and multilateral partners were fully mobilized both during the local popular consultations and at the different stages of the preparation and organization of the Forum.

I would also like to thank the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and the Sangaris force for the

wide range of logistical support they provided, and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue for its support since the beginning of the dialogue process.

I also wish to thank His Excellency Mr. José Eduardo dos Santos, President of the Republic of Angola, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation for their significant financial support, along with the Economic Community of Central African States, the African Development Bank and the African Union.

Distinguished guests,

Dear compatriots,

In closing, I would like to express one final wish, namely that this Forum will result in the birth of:

- A Central African Republic that is rid of all the demons of division, hatred and the rejection of others
- A Central African Republic that is made up of citizens who are aware of their duties and are committed to the defence of their rights
- A Central African Republic that is secular, multi-faith, multi-ethnic and multicultural
- A Central African Republic that is whole and indivisible.

It is with these words of hope that I declare open the Bangui National Forum.

Long live international solidarity. Long live the Central African Republic!

I thank you for your kind attention.

Annex III to the letter dated 15 May 2015 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Central African Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement delivered by Ms. Catherine Samba-Panza, Head of State of the Transition, at the closing ceremony of the Bangui National Forum, held in the chamber of the National Transitional Council, on 4 May 2015

The Minister of State, Chief of Staff of the Office of the President of the Republic of the Congo, representing His Excellency Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, International Mediator in the crisis in the Central African Republic,

The Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Equatorial Guinea, personal representative of His Excellency Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of Equatorial Guinea, current President of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community,

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Angola, representative of His Excellency Mr. José Eduardo dos Santos, current Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region,

The representatives of Heads of State and Government,

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations,

The representative of the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States,

The representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission,

The representative of the Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region,

The representative of the g7+ from the Republic of Timor-Leste,

The representative of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue,

The Chair of the Commission of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community,

The representative of the International Organization of la Francophonie,

The Special Representative of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation,

The Head of the Egyptian delegation,

The President of the National Transitional Council,

The Prime Minister, Head of Government of the Transition,

The President of the Transitional Constitutional Court,

The heads of the institutions of the Republic,

Members of the Transitional Government,

Heads of delegations and representatives of international institutions,

Ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions and consular posts,

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the delegates to the Bangui National Forum, all the people of the Central African Republic and myself, I wish to cordially welcome to the closing ceremony of what is a historic gathering for my country, all the eminent persons assembled here, and particularly those who have been with us since the Forum's opening ceremony.

Distinguished guests,

Your majesties the sultans, traditional and customary chiefs of the Central African Republic,

Representatives of political parties, unions and associations,

The President of the Presidium of the Bangui National Forum,

Members of the Presidium of the Bangui National Forum,

Delegates to the Bangui National Forum,

The people of the Central African Republic, my fellow compatriots,

Everyone has referred to the Bangui National Forum as the final opportunity for the people of the Central African Republic. We have seized the opportunity to talk to each other frankly and fraternally, and to issue a heartfelt appeal to all the people of the country, at home and abroad, to join us, so that together, we may break the cycle of recurrent conflicts in which we have been caught for more than 20 years.

Like all the people of the Central African Republic, I followed the deliberations of the Forum from start to finish. The discussions were at times poignant, passionate even, reflecting deep, long-endured suffering. Nonetheless, the delegates were able to overcome their subjective constraints to calmly analyse the causes of our suffering and to propose suitable solutions.

Today's ceremony marks the end of what was a truly national and inclusive forum, held on Central African Republic soil, as its sons and daughters had wished.

The Bangui National Forum not only brought together some 800 delegates in the chamber of the National Transitional Council, but involved the entire population of the Central African Republic. The people followed radio broadcasts of the discussions practically throughout the country. Many listeners participated indirectly in the discussions, not only by discussing the issues within their communities, but also by sending their ideas to the delegates for the committees and plenary sessions.

We had announced, at the opening of this national gathering, that the dialogue would be open to all. That promise of openness was undoubtedly kept. But for obvious reasons, some compatriots were not able to fulfil their wish to participate in the process.

We regret the marginal boycotts of this national gathering, which in no way detract from its inclusiveness, as evidenced by the effective presence of entities representing all segments of our society.

For one week, the country lived and breathed the Bangui National Forum; a week in which the barriers between the citizens of the north, south, east, west and centre began to fall; a week which saw forgiveness on all sides. And in this context, forgiveness must be understood as a true opening of hearts and minds.

But above all, forgiveness means breaking with a humiliating past, because a look back at our own history reveals a shameful picture, depicting indiscriminate violence, pillage, destruction and killing.

This is why the signing of the historic agreement yesterday between the Government and the armed groups truly embodied the willingness of the entire society of the Central African Republic to turn the page on the dark chapter of its history.

I warmly welcome this willingness by the armed groups to work in earnest for peace and thus to bring to an end the suffering of the people of this country. I encourage them to move beyond the mere formality of signing an agreement and fulfil their commitment to work towards the definitive return of security and peace throughout the country.

In the course of our discussions, although we sometimes accused the outside world of having contributed to our misfortune, we also took a responsible, critical and candid look at ourselves, acknowledging that we had truly dug our own graves.

There is therefore reason to believe that the Bangui National Forum marks the beginning of a profound transformation of the society of the Central African Republic. The people of the Central African Republic have shown that, henceforth, they wish to write their own history. Hope is being reborn. This was embodied at this Forum by the legitimate aspiration of the people of the Central African Republic to peace, security, justice, freedom and sustainable human development.

But the spirit of the Bangui National Forum must live on after this event and continue to unite the people of the Central African Republic who love their country.

In my opening address to this Forum I promised that I would ensure that all of its conclusions were respected. I am now reaffirming that promise, which I will formalize through the Bangui National Forum recommendations follow-up mechanism, to ensure that the hope born of the Forum could progressively win over all hearts and give the people of the Central African Republic reason to hope for a better tomorrow.

But the true drivers of the change inspired by this Forum are the transitional institutions and those that will be established following the elections. Those institutions will be primarily responsible for driving the long-awaited change which the follow-up mechanism will only evaluate.

We must therefore all set to work immediately, because the consensus of ideas must translate into concrete actions. We have no choice but to succeed. To do that, we must find the courage and the determination to finally build a new, democratic and prosperous Central African Republic.

In all your analyses of our country's problems, it was frequently mentioned that we are lagging behind owing to "the lack of political will".

From my point of view, the cure for the lack of political will is perhaps "political courage". Implementation of the recommendations of the Bangui National

Forum will undoubtedly require political courage, because the problems will not be solved by magic, but we must keep pushing forward.

The upcoming elections must not make us forget the substance of the Bangui National Forum. However, to ensure the emergence of a new Central African Republic, we should continue to nurture the values bequeathed to us today by the Bangui National Forum. The whole world is watching us following the step we have taken towards peace.

Excellencies, representatives of Heads of State, distinguished guests,

You are witnessing today the solemn commitment of the people of the Central African Republic to bury the hatchet once and for all, to consolidate national reconciliation, and to march resolutely towards stable democracy and economic recovery.

I must thank all our visitors and all those who sent messages of encouragement to the people of the Central African Republic urging them never to reawaken the old demons. This great celebration of forgiveness and national reconciliation in the Central African Republic will, this time around, leave an indelible mark in the collective and individual consciousness of the people of the Central African Republic, as was the case at the time of the reconciliation among the former comrades of founding President Barthémémy Boganda, the late President David Dacko and the late Professor Abel Goumba during the national dialogue in 2003, after more than 40 years of disagreement. By the purest of chances, the date of the end of this Forum, 11 May 2015, marks the sixth anniversary of the death of Professor Abel Goumba, which occurred on 11 May 2009. May he rest in peace!

Distinguished guests,

Dear compatriots,

The fact that the Bangui National Forum has been actually held proves that the Government and myself are committed to keeping the promises that we made to the nation, to our international partners and to history, to allow the men and women of the Central African Republic to come together to talk and to restore security and true peace in their hearts and minds.

Mr. President of the Bangui National Forum,

Members of the Presidium of the Bangui National Forum,

Delegates to the Bangui National Forum,

The radio and television kept us all informed about your colossal undertaking, the assessments that you made and the solutions that you have proposed. I congratulate you wholeheartedly and warmly.

In the different committees, you heard expressions of forgiveness from our country's political figures and the poignant testimonies of the victims or their loved ones.

You insightfully noted that the multifaceted crises that have been undermining the Central African Republic for more than a decade have terribly debilitated its social capital. Living conditions have been profoundly affected and purchasing power has been considerably eroded. Unfortunately, the ability of those in power to respond has been extremely limited.

You defined the broad economic, social and cultural policies which henceforth should guide the affairs of State. You also considered the problems of governance and development, with a particular emphasis on political and institutional matters, including the return to constitutional order.

You all condemned impunity and pleaded for a form of justice that is fair and free of hatred and capable of healing victims' wounds.

You proposed many recommendations which you felt could offer lasting solutions to the ills that have afflicted our dear country.

I would like to sincerely congratulate all the participants in the Forum, who acted in a responsible and patriotic manner, thus ensuring the favourable outcome which the people of the Central African Republic had been demanding.

The Bangui National Forum undeniably marks a fundamental stage in the success of the transition.

We all want this harmonious and peaceful transition to facilitate our country's return to democracy and the choice of its leaders through free and transparent elections.

The return to true constitutional freedom, by means of credible elections, following an appropriate timetable, has been one of the most powerful recommendations of the Bangui National Forum.

I share with the people of the Central African Republic the most heartfelt desire to see such elections take place before the end of 2015, as recommended by the Forum. We must all truly want that. All of us — the transitional institutions, the National Electoral Authority and the international community — must show our determination to meet that deadline by getting down to work as soon as this Forum is over. This return to democracy which we are advocating will consolidate peace in our country.

Delegates to the Bangui National Forum,

Let me turn again to the recommendation regarding the establishment of a follow-up mechanism for the Bangui National Forum.

As you yourselves most pertinently noted in your many speeches, the recommendations and resolutions adopted at the several gatherings we have held in the past have unfortunately only been partially implemented by the political authorities, despite the establishment of follow-up bodies.

This means that good resolutions and recommendations and the agencies mandated to follow up their implementation cannot by themselves magically solve the serious problems facing our country.

We must also work sincerely and resolutely. If we do not do this, our brothers who have worked so hard to help us for so many years might ultimately become fed up and even tired of our turpitude, if they have not already done so.

For my part, I would like to further reassure you. I was determined to organize a dialogue among the people of the Central African Republic because I felt that it was necessary.

I will do my best to ensure that the recommendations that have come out of the Bangui National Forum lead to true change. Having served as the head of a national follow-up agency, I will do my best to prevent the follow-up mechanism of our Forum from falling into the same traps as previous follow-up committees.

Of course, these recommendations will be implemented following the appropriate methods provided for in the laws of the Republic.

Several of the recommendations do not require any financial resources, nor do they have major financial implications. Those will be implemented as a priority. Implementation of the recommendations requiring financial resources will depend essentially on the means at our disposal.

The Bangui National Forum Follow-up Committee which will be established will oversee the implementation of those recommendations and will report regularly to me.

Of course, the Committee will have to include other stakeholders, such as our African and international partners and the economic agents without whom our economy cannot recover.

Dear delegates to the Bangui National Forum,

Henceforth, your mission is to explain to and raise the awareness of our compatriots, wherever they may be. If we provide ourselves with a stable and dynamic democracy and work in earnest, the international community will be with us and will readily assist and support us in our efforts.

Thus, the Government, the National Transitional Council, civil society, the defence and security forces, political parties, unions, young people, women, men and myself, all of us together, each according to his or her ability, must share in the responsibility of making this transition a success, but especially of laying solid foundations for the emergence of a new republic. I am convinced beyond any doubt that this time around change is within our grasp, and that it is up to us to finally get off to a good start. I am humbly convinced that we will be able to safely lead the Central African Republic towards the transition.

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me once more to express my profound gratitude to President Denis Sassou Nguesso, in his dual capacity as President of the fraternal Republic of the Congo and International Mediator in the crisis in the Central African Republic, for the special interest he has brought to the resolution of the crisis in our country.

I hope that the representatives of the Heads of State attending this closing ceremony will help to faithfully convey my expressions of gratitude to my peers in the subregion. I am especially grateful to His Excellency Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, current President of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community; and His Excellency Mr. Eduardo dos Santos, President of Angola and current Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

Of course, I also wish to thank the international community and to request that it continue to support the Transitional Authorities and the people of the Central

African Republic as they work towards reconciliation, the rebirth of their nation-State and the reconstruction of their country.

In that regard, I would again like to express my deep gratitude and that of all the people of the Central African Republic to the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, and all the institutions and friendly and fraternal countries which will continue to assist in the transition process through their effective work within the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic.

I could not close my remarks without thanking from the bottom of my heart the members of the Presidium of the Bangui Forum for their unfailing dedication. I want to thank in particular the Deputy Mediator in the crisis in the Central African Republic and the President of the Presidium of the Forum, Professor Abdoulaye Bathily.

Sir, thanks to the culture of tolerance and the rigour which have shaped your intellectual life and to your years of experience in political struggles and, above all, to your humility and wisdom, you have been able to use your talents as a group leader, a tireless debater and an impenitent negotiator to seek dynamic compromises which prevented this Forum from running into an impasse.

Your enormous capacity for mediation that comes from your willingness to listen, your knowledge of the actors and the issues involved in the crisis in the Central African Republic, your great patience and your unshakeable will to urge your compatriots, whatever the cost, to bring the crisis to an end have earned our admiration and our respect. You have been the true architect of the success of this Forum and the people of the Central African Republic will be eternally grateful to you as a result.

I personally simply want to say thank you; thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Distinguished guests,

Dear compatriots,

I wish our illustrious guests and compatriots who came from the provinces, neighbouring and fraternal countries, the diaspora from other African countries, Europe and the United States a safe return home. As regards my compatriots, I would ask them to continue spreading the spirit of the Forum so that it might take root wherever there are citizens of the Central African Republic. I also ask for their full indulgence for any material inadequacies they observed in the conditions of their stay among us. I know that they understand our present difficulties and will not hold that against us.

I could not close these proceedings without requesting some heartfelt applause. Let us give a round of applause to:

The Preparatory Committee of the Bangui National Forum,

The Technical Organizing Committee of the Forum,

The President of the National Transitional Council, for making the Council's chamber available to us,

The Prime Minister and the Government, for having led this dialogue process from Brazzaville,

The delegates to the Forum, for the work they did during the meetings,

The armed groups which have agreed to give up their weapons,

Our defence and internal security forces, for their work to bring security to our country,

The international forces, for supporting the efforts to bring security to the country,

The political parties, for their contribution to a peaceful transition,

Civil society and the children, young people and women of the Central African Republic, for their ability to recover after these multiple crises,

The sultans, traditional chiefs and leaders who have played a major role in bringing peace to the country,

The different congregations for the work undertaken to ensure the opening of hearts and minds,

The people of the Central African Republic for all the sacrifices they have endured.

My dear compatriots,

May the peace of God be with us from this day forward!

May the seed of true reconciliation that the Forum has just planted grow in our hearts, so that the Central African Republic might live!

Long live international solidarity in the service of peace in the world!

On that note, I declare the proceedings of the Bangui National Forum closed. I thank you for your kind attention.